



11 High Gate Lane, West Hartford, CT 06107-1010  
Phone/Fax 860.519.0023  
www.ct-asbo.org

Testimony of CASBO before the Planning & Development Committee - February 4, 2015

**In opposition to: HB 5085 An Act Authorizing Oversight over Non-educational Expenses in School Budgets By Municipal Boards of Finance**

Senator Osten, Representative Miller and members of Planning & Development Committee, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to present testimony regarding HB 5085.

My name is David G. Lenihan and I am a retired Business Manager with over 14 years of experience in this field. I am also a past president of CASBO, a non-profit professional organization that represents school business officials (SBOs) that work in most of the 169 towns in Connecticut. I currently work for CASBO as its legislative liaison.

SBOs are responsible for most aspects of school business and operations. This includes, but not limited to, overseeing school grounds and facilities, budget development and control, purchasing, accounting and transportation, food services, etc.

CASBO opposes HB 5085 for the following reasons:

- This bill is an unnecessary overreach by the legislature to change the statutory authority rightfully placed on Boards of Education for the implementation of all educational interests for local communities. Specifically, Section 10-220 of the CGS defines the duties of the Board of Education to include "(a) Each local or regional board of education shall maintain good public elementary and secondary schools, implement the educational interests of the state as defined in section 10-4a and provide such other educational activities as in its judgment will best serve the interests of the school district .....and provide an appropriate learning environment for its students which includes (1) adequate instructional books, supplies, materials, equipment, staffing, facilities and technology, (2) equitable allocation of resources among its schools, (3) proper maintenance of facilities and (4) a safe school setting." In order meet these significant responsibilities, Boards of Education and their staffs must have the authority to exercise full control over every aspect of providing education to our children. To have decision making bifurcated for certain expenses incurred to educate our children would be unwise, counter productive and would possibly lead to decisions that are detrimental to the education of children
- Knowledge and expertise of the inner workings of a school rests with the staffs that oversee and operate the buildings as they relate to the education of the students who are the responsibility of the local board of education as defined under CGS Section 10-220 above. Municipal Boards of Finance have to focus on other aspects of local government. To place this responsibility in the hands of others who are not directly knowledgeable of the day-to-day operations that impact children would again lead to decisions that are not in the best interests of children.
- The development of education budgets goes through a very thorough vetting and approval process. This includes many meetings with municipal officials, public hearings and, in many cases, town referendums. Once the budget is passed it is the BOE's and their staffs' responsibility to implement and monitor the budget to meet their responsibilities and not over expend the total appropriation. Again, the BOE is legally responsible and fully accountable for exercising this responsibility.
- Over many years, BOEs have worked cooperatively with local municipalities and other school districts, in mutually beneficial ways. These efforts have helped streamline and economize procurement. These include, but not limited to: electricity, oil, diesel, technology, supplies, health insurance and other benefits, shared services, transportation, etc. The economies of scale produced by larger purchases by districts have benefited districts and towns alike. CASBO is concerned that HB 5085 will impact negatively the cooperation and collaboration between the BOE and other municipal boards.

For the reasons stated above, CASBO believes that HB 5085 will interfere with the ability of boards of education to fulfill their statutory responsibilities and impede the delivery of education services to the children of CT. We, therefore, urge you to reject HB 5085.